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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002427

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM IZ

SUBJECT: TALABANI, BARZANI, HAKIM (MAYBE) TO PRESS PM
JAFERI ON GOVERNING STYLE, INCLUSIVENESS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James F. Jeffrey for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Charge was called to a meeting with Deputy PM Rowsch Shaways (KDP) on June 7 to discuss the latest developments on the political front, with emphasis on Kurdish views. Shaways began by reviewing the state of play with the Kurds: Barzani should be sworn in as President in Irbil on Monday, with further steps to stand up the Kurdish Regional Government programmed in the next days to complete that process, which Shaways termed a major success for both Kurdish parties. Following the swearing-in, Barzani plans to come to Baghdad probably on June 16. His primary focus will be on adding impetus to the constitutional process. Following this introduction, Shaways brought up his main theme, the need to rein in PM Jafari's non-inclusive tendencies.

¶2. (C) After reviewing various faults in governance shown by Jafari (many of which, frankly, we share), Shaways said that the Presidency in particular was unhappy with the lack of consultation. The deputy prime ministers (including Shaways, who perhaps is the most left out) were miffed at not being given specific portfolios, and the parliament was unhappy about not being consulted in advance on the PM's Turkey trip and the UNSCR 1546 review.

¶3. (C) Consequently, President Talabani will meet with Jafari on June 8 to raise these concerns and urge a change in Jafari's style. Shaways handed over a five page Arabic text, basically a non-paper, that Talabani would either use or hand over, that spelled out all the above concerns in detail. The scathing treatise directly confronts Jafari for acting "unilaterally and deviating from the (UIA/Kurdish Alliance) political agreement and the TAL," scolding the PM for altering the oath of office and marginalizing Article 58. The document chides Jafari for the appointment of Leith Kubba as ITG spokesman, characterizing him as "chauvinistic and anti-Kurdish." Lamenting the PM's formation of nine committees which he directly controls, the document alleges that the DPMs have been "transformed into ministers of state without work or function." The Prime Minister is accused of "flagrant legal violations" of articles 1, 24 and 25 of the TAL, namely by disregarding the separation of powers through the appointment of senior ITG officials without the consultation of the TNA or the Presidency Council. Finally, PM Jafari is repeatedly charged with discounting the spirit of Article 58 of the TAL by "unilaterally and haphazardly" ignoring the issue, resulting in a "flagrant violation of the TAL." Talabani warns in closing that this is a matter which he "cannot be silent about." (NOTE: Exact text of Talabani's letter to follow in SEPTEL. END NOTE)

¶4. (C) Talabani also plans to call for a steering group of a handful of Iraqis--balanced between Sunni Arabs, Shi'a Arabs, and Kurds--to do the key work on the constitution ("just like we did with the TAL"), and for it then to be approved by the parliament. This initiative and the non-paper text have been, according to Shaways, "approved" by Barzani. Talabani has also reviewed the initiative with SCIRI Chief Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, who will accompany Talabani to the Jafari meeting. When pressed, however, Shaways would not claim explicitly that al-Hakim had endorsed the non-paper text.

¶5. (C) Shaways clearly wanted at a minimum a green light from us on this initiative. Charge limited himself to saying that any effort to streamline government procedures and improve coordination and cooperation among government elements was to be applauded. Charge then asked how Shaways thought the meeting, which amounted to a confrontation with Jafari, would come out. Here Shaways was optimistic, saying that he believed that the President, Hakim, and Jafari would come to an agreement on these issues.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: There is a lot going on here. The non-paper is written by Talabani, judging from the style. It is very tough and accusatory. Our own take of Jafari is that if confronted so openly, he could well react stubbornly. We are not sure also to what degree al-Hakim is on board on the specific charges Talabani makes. If he has signed up to all of this and supports Talabani, Jafari could have a very rough meeting. Nevertheless, there is no one more anti-Jafari than Shaways, and he clearly wants to paint the situation with Jafari as negatively as possible, and attain maximum U.S. support for the "Kurdish" point of view. END COMMENT.

17. (C) Charge and DCM will leverage their previously scheduled appointment on June 8 with President Talabani to follow-up on this issue.

18. (U) Minimize considered for Iraq REOs.
Jeffrey